

# Pinnacles National Park

## 2014 Business Plan





Produced by  
National Park Service  
Business Management Group  
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California condors warm themselves by basking in the sun.

**National Park Service Mission:** *The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and intrinsic values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.*

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From top: A non-native European honeybee visits milkweed flowers; Bear Gulch Reservoir provides year-round water for many wildlife species; the pig fence requires regular monitoring and maintenance.





Letter from the Superintendent

On behalf of our National Park Service team, it is my privilege to present the 2014–2018 business plan for Pinnacles National Park. This document provides a five year vision for park operations and preservation of key resources.

The business plan is a key document towards implementing the 2013 Pinnacles General Management Plan (GMP). In the GMP, Pinnacles National Park focused on the many changes that have occurred within the last 20 years of park history, including its growth from approximately 16,000 acres to nearly 27,000 acres and an expanded scope of natural and cultural resources. As a result of this growth, managers looked at ways of providing new and continued recreational opportunities while ensuring strong natural and cultural resource stewardship.

This business plan will assist the park in meeting these challenges and opportunities by providing specific strategic goals and objectives for park operations. The plan provides a comprehensive look at ways to maximize and leverage existing dollars, examines ideas for finding and effectively utilizing new revenue streams, and defines ways to move forward in times of fiscal restraint.

It is important to look at this plan with realistic expectations. It is not possible to answer every question or address every scenario park managers could face in the future. We strive to expend taxpayer dollars wisely and effectively while using transparent and proven financial practices to manage operations. This plan provides a basic framework for those efforts. In the end, we have an obligation to ensure our strategies

are progressive, sustainable, collaborative, and help us achieve our mission as outlined in the Organic Act.

I want to express my appreciation for all those who assisted in this project through the stages of planning, review, revision, and final publication. The business plan for Pinnacles National Park is the result of hard work by many committed NPS staff at the park and the Washington Office, and our partner organization, Net Impact. This document will provide thoughtful guidance to park leadership as we preserve and protect the resources unimpaired and provide for visitor enjoyment of Pinnacles National Park now and into the future.

Sincerely,



**Karen Beppler-Dorn**  
Superintendent



Business Planning at the National Park Service

Business Planning at the National Park Service

Business planning at the National Park Service facilitates effective park management by helping parks define priorities and identify clear action plans for achieving these priorities. The business planning process combines strategic goal setting with operational planning and analysis to identify the most critical facets of park operations. By combining these approaches, the business planning process helps parks effectively allocate resources to achieve goals, maximizing the value of public dollars. The intended audience for business plans includes internal park management and external stakeholders.

The business plan for Pinnacles National Park (“Pinnacles,” or “the park”) comes at a critical time in the park’s history. In January 2013, Pinnacles was elevated to national park status and in June 2013 the park completed its General Management Plan (GMP), which defines its strategic direction and long-term vision for the next 15–20 years. The park’s business plan complements the GMP by operationalizing its long-term strategic direction over the next three to five years.

The business plan sets out to accomplish three tasks. First, the plan provides a clear overview of park history, resources, and strategic priorities. Second, it presents an overview of park operations, including detailed information on staffing, funding sources, and key functions and programs by park division. Third, the plan outlines financial projections under various funding scenarios and details cost-saving and revenue-generating strategies for maintaining and strengthening core operations.



*The talus caves at Pinnacles are formed by boulders wedging down into narrow canyons.*



Executive Summary

Executive Summary (continued)

Pinnacles National Park faces a period of operational transformation and adaptation. In the past five years, the park has grown in size and responsibility, and now has new enabling legislation that broadens the scope of its significance and purpose. These forces shape the park’s strategic goals and day-to-day operations. The following key themes emerged during the business planning process:

1

**Growth in size and complexity outstripping park base budget.** From Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 to FY 2013, total park assets increased in number by 80 percent. Concurrently, the park’s appropriated base budget increased by only 42 percent.

- In FY 2006, Bottomlands acquisitions significantly expanded park boundaries and added important historic resources.
- In FY 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided one-time project funding for needed investment in west side facilities, including a new visitor center. This project funding did not come with additional base funding to cover the ongoing costs of maintaining and operating the new facilities, straining the park’s existing budget.
- In FY 2012, Pinnacles’ appropriated base budget decreased by 3.6 percent.
- In FY 2013, Pinnacles base budget decreased by 6 percent. Management is planning for additional reductions in FY 2014.

2

**Necessity of identifying efficiencies, cost savings, and alternative funding sources.** Due to recent budget reductions, park staff and management have placed new emphasis on becoming a leaner operation by identifying efficiencies and cost-saving opportunities, all while continuing to provide the best service possible. At the same time, the park has and will continue to shift resources to focus only on its highest operational priorities, and will attempt to secure new sources of funding to sustain park operations.

3

**Atypical seasonal operations.** While many responsibilities, particularly those relating to resource management, are present year-round, levels of visitor services vary over the course of the year. Busy season at Pinnacles falls earlier than at most parks. With high temperatures throughout the summer, visitation tends to peak during the spring months of March, April, and May, requiring temporarily increased staffing levels. The park’s climate also influences maintenance and construction projects, limiting major work to cooler, non-summer months. The need for a large seasonal workforce creates challenges related to recruitment, onboarding, and the retention of institutional knowledge. Moreover, the unique timing of this need requires advanced planning and coordination between managers and HR support teams.

4

**Consolidation of park operations through shared services.** Many of the services and activities necessary to run the park operate through a network structure that facilitates the sharing of staff across multiple NPS units. Some of these networked services include: human resources, information technology, contracting, natural resource inventory and monitoring, and fire and safety. This consolidation offers efficiencies, but also poses operational challenges related to implementing critical park services with a decentralized workforce.

5

**Transition to National Park status.** Pinnacles’ status change from National Monument to National Park has brought new enabling legislation, more visitors to the park, additional media exposure, increased expectations for services, and public misconceptions that national park status equates to increased funding.



Snowfall is an uncommon but welcome sight in the High Peaks.

Park Orientation

Park Orientation

Pinnacles National Park lies in the heart of the Gabilan Mountains in California’s central Coast Ranges, between San Benito and Monterey Counties, approximately 40 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean and 80 miles south of the San Francisco Bay Area. The park is bordered entirely by private land, much of it in rangeland and agricultural use.

The Gabilan range bisects Pinnacles National Park into distinct east and west sides, connected only by trails. California State Route 146 provides access to the east and west sides of the park. Hollister and King City are the closest cities to the park’s east entrance and Soledad is the closest city to the park’s west entrance. The east side greets more visitors, typically around 70 percent of the park total, and provides more visitor services, including a visitor center, campground facilities, and numerous trailheads. The west side is less developed, but a visitor contact station opened there in April 2012.

History and Enabling Legislation

History and Enabling Legislation

President Theodore Roosevelt established Pinnacles National Monument in 1908 under the Antiquities Act to preserve and protect remnants of ancient volcanic processes that formed a portion of the Gabilan Mountain Range. On January 10, 2013 President Barack Obama signed the Pinnacles National Park Act, elevating the monument to national park status. The boundaries of Pinnacles expanded multiple times over the past 100 years, enlarging the park from its original acreage of 2,080 to its current size of 26,606 acres.



From left: The 16,000 acres of wilderness that cover the landscape are an important resource at Pinnacles National Park; the turnoff to Pinnacles from the unpaved county road in the 1920s.



Resources

Resources

Congress established Pinnacles National Park to protect the unique geologic features formed through volcanic and tectonic processes in the Gabilan Mountain ecoregion. These crags and rock spires are remnants of the Pinnacles-Neenach volcanic field, originally located near present-day Lancaster, CA, but shifted 195 miles northwest along the San Andreas Fault by 23 million years of tectonic movements.

Pinnacles National Park contains 26,606 acres of chaparral, oak savanna and grassland, and riparian habitats, which provide abundant refuge for wildlife. Pinnacles lays claim to the world’s highest known bee diversity per unit area with over 400 species of native bees. Additionally, park habitats support 14 types of bats, 120 native bird species, 70 species of butterflies, 41 dragonfly and damselfly species, one species of native fish, and three federally threatened or endangered species—the California condor, California tiger salamander, and California red-legged frog.

Pinnacles hosts a rich sampling of flora diversity as well; nearly 10 percent of the known plant species in California can be found within park boundaries. Park vegetation includes over 650 vascular plant species and 293 species of lichens.

In addition to flora and fauna, the park boasts atmospheric resources including geologic and topographic viewsheds, dark night skies, natural soundscapes, and excellent air quality on most days. These atmospheric resources are largely dependent on influences outside park boundaries, and the park benefits from surrounding areas that have retained vast open landscapes.

Pinnacles also encompasses a rich array of cultural resources, including archeological and ethnographic sites, historic structures, cultural landscapes, and museum objects. Park staff work with traditionally associated peoples, including California Indian people and descendants of the area’s first homesteaders, to understand the ways in which people have interacted with the landscape over time. For the first time in Pinnacles National Park’s 100-year history, the park is engaging with tribal partners for in-depth participation in research, education, and resource management.



The biodiversity of Pinnacles results from its Mediterranean climate and location in the transitional zone between the California Coast Range and the Sierra Nevada mountains.

Visitation

Over the past decade, Pinnacles has seen an average of 182,000 visitors each year. Since 2006, visitation has trended steadily upwards, reaching an estimated 231,000 in 2013. While outdoor recreation, wildlife viewing, scenic vistas, and educational opportunities draw visitors throughout the year, the greatest number of visitors arrive between March and May, when cooler temperatures and blooming wildflowers draw visitors to the park. During high visitation months, rangers provide interpretive programs at the amphitheater and on park trails on the east and west sides. The park’s picnic areas and easy-to-moderate hiking trails, such as the Bear Gulch Trail, are popular family destinations. Other popular activities include exploring the Balconies and Bear Gulch Caves, as well as climbing and bouldering on rock formations. Pinnacles provides many climbing routes of varying difficulty that attract climbing enthusiasts from around the world.

The Pinnacles East Side Visitor Center provides visitors with information on the park and its resources.



Hikers enjoy the opportunity to talk with a park ranger out on the trail.



Personnel

Personnel

In FY 2012, Pinnacles employed a total of 89 staff members—26 permanent full-time employees (PFT), 21 permanent subject-to-furlough employees (PSF), 35 seasonal employees who work less than six months a year (SEAS), and 7 short-term (TERM) and student temporary employment program (STEP) hires. In recent years, the composition of Pinnacles’ workforce has shifted to include relatively fewer permanent full-time positions and relatively more seasonal and subject-to-furlough employees. This provides the park with greater financial flexibility, and better aligns staff resources with seasonal needs.

Total hours worked by all employees equaled 45.7 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in FY 2012 (calculated based on one full-time equivalent person working for 2,080 hours per year). Employees work in one of five divisions, with 13.8 FTE in Facility Operations and Maintenance, 12.3 FTE in Research and Resource Management, 8.8 FTE in Interpretation and Education, 5.8 FTE in Management and Administration, and 5.0 FTE in Visitor and Resource Protection.

*\*Note: The term “permanent, subject-to-furlough” is broadly used within the National Park Service and refers to career seasonal positions. These positions are permanent appointments and the employees work under an agreed schedule that includes at least two weeks but no more than six months in nonduty/nonpay status.*

Personnel (continued)



*Park management team members celebrate Pinnacles’ new National Park status.*

Pinnacles staffing levels reflect the needs of the park throughout the year. Habitat restoration and trail work occur from March through mid-August and again from late-September through October, and the condor program runs primarily from March through mid-November. An increase in staff headcount in late December, January, and February stems from the need to train seasonal interpretation and law enforcement staff ahead of the peak visitation season.



Employee and Visitor Safety

Employee and Visitor Safety (continued)

Employee and Visitor Safety

The National Park Service is committed to employee and visitor safety. Historically, Pinnacles National Park has had a higher number of employee and visitor accidents relative to NPS averages. In FY 2012, the park had 13.8 employee accidents per 100 FTE and 7.1 serious visitor incidents per 100,000 visits. Incidents include poison oak exposure, heat-related illnesses, lost hikers who end up on the opposite side of the park from their vehicle, ill-prepared or distressed climbers, and trips and falls resulting in physical injuries. While employee accident levels have decreased since FY 2010, visitor safety incident levels have fluctuated and both remain above the NPS average.



Pinnacles staff practice rescue skills.



Top: Pinnacles Wildlands Fire team works with tribal partners.  
Bottom: The park uses fire to manage vegetation in McCabe Canyon.

The park is working hard to improve both employee and visitor safety. To improve employee safety, the park holds monthly all-staff safety meetings led by an inter-divisional Safety Committee. The committee has identified and targeted “normalized risk,” situations where employees become desensitized to the risk of their occupational environment. To further improve employee and visitor safety, Pinnacles will perform the following actions over the next three to five years:

- Conduct a thorough review of historical incidents and investigations and develop a consistent and uniform approach to tracking and analyzing this information over time.
- Conduct an Operations Review of the Visitor and Resource Protection Division (VRP) using outside experts to identify gaps in risk prevention.
- Evaluate the recruitment process for seasonal VRP rangers to determine an optimal timeframe and sources of qualified applicants.
- Improve communication channels to create a workplace where staff can report safety concerns or incidents without fear of reprisal.
- Ensure all employees complete Operational Leadership training, implement Operational Leadership principles at the park, and create an evaluation system to measure the effectiveness of Operational Leadership.
- Create standards and train employees to increase supervisory field observation.
- Prepare and review job safety and hazard analyses for all activities and projects.
- Analyze and develop enhancements in visitor communication to decrease frequency of the two top safety hazards: heat-related incidents and lost hikers/climbers.
  - » Install more frequent, prominent, and detailed signs with suggestions of how much water to carry per hiker/climber depending on the trail and time of day.
  - » Strategically place signs to better orient hikers to the various parking areas on the two sides of the park.



Volunteers

Park Networks and Shared Services

Volunteers

Volunteers at Pinnacles play a critical role in supporting the park’s ability to carry out its mission. Pinnacles National Park has built an active Volunteer-in-Parks (VIP) program, which has grown over 300 percent since FY 2008. Program growth is largely due to hiring program-dedicated staff, as well as incorporating Public Land Corps interns and youth work crews into the VIP program.

In FY 2012, the park hosted 748 volunteers who contributed 24,748 hours of service to the park. Volunteer activities include habitat restoration, trail maintenance, research support, condor conservation, and visitor experiences such as night hikes and star gazing. One specific program, Preventative Search and Rescue (PSAR), brings volunteer hikers into the park on weekends when park staff are unable to fully cover daylight hours. The park equips these volunteers with a radio and trains them to respond to emergencies. Another successful program draws volunteer groups from local girl and boy scout troops, colleges, and native plant societies each spring weekend to work on habitat restoration initiatives. Annual volunteer hours equates to 12 FTE—representing a 26 percent boost to personnel hours—at very little direct cost to the park. The intangible impacts of this robust volunteer program are equally important, and include increasing safety, building community, and cultivating stewards.



A volunteer uses radio telemetry to track California condors.

Habitat Restoration Volunteer Program

Pinnacles’ habitat restoration volunteer program successfully attracts a significant number of groups and individuals on a repeat basis to assist with conservation efforts at the park. This program accounts for over 50 percent of the park’s total volunteer base. In 2012, 432 volunteers, including school groups and girls scout troops, local businesses, and non-profits, provided 1,311 volunteer hours. Projects include soil erosion fencing, weeding of invasive plants, trash and microtrash clean-up, and trail maintenance.



Every year, hundreds of volunteers work on habitat restoration projects at the park.



Looking West from Pinnacles across the San Andreas Fault Zone.

Pathways for Youth

The “Pathways for Youth” program supports work across all divisions and contributes to Pinnacles’ ability to achieve park-wide goals. The Pathways initiative seeks to foster local engagement and increase diversity of park stewards, volunteers, partners, and staff. A new federal program, Pathways for Youth creates opportunities for participants to transition to permanent or seasonal positions at the park or other federal areas, depending on funding capacity and park needs. Pinnacles has developed youth programs in partnership with the Student Conservation Association (SCA), American Conservation Experience (ACE), and the California Conservation Corps (CCC). These programs provide hands-on work experience and skills training, engaging a variety of young stewards in volunteer and temporary work at the park through a progression of experiences that create a pathway to full-time employment with the NPS.



Pathways program participant John Donham helps set up for the Pinnacles National Park rededication ceremony.



Partnerships and Cooperating Organizations

Partnerships and Cooperating Organizations

Pinnacles Partnership

The Pinnacles Partnership (PIPA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, fundraising, and support organization established in 2007 to aid and promote park programs and objectives. PIPA works with Pinnacles National Park on projects involving fundraising, volunteer leadership, public participation, and educational outreach. Pinnacles National Park views PIPA as a critical partner in expanding park capacity for educational programming, park stewardship opportunities, and other projects that enhance visitor experience.

Friends of Pinnacles

Friends of Pinnacles is a group of organized rock climbers that strives to preserve the natural resources at Pinnacles National Park and the accessibility of climbing routes for recreational use. The primary goals of Friends of Pinnacles include reducing the impact of climbing on resources, rehabilitating high-use areas, supporting effective management of climbing activities, helping construct and maintain trails and facilities used by climbers, developing and distributing educational materials, and promoting low-impact outdoor recreation.

Western National Parks Association

The Western National Parks Association (WNPA) works with over 60 parks in 12 states to provide products and programming to enhance the visitor experience. Retail sales serve as the main source of funds WNPA uses to provide aid to parks. At Pinnacles, WNPA operates three bookstores (two on the east side and one on the west side). These book-

stores offer merchandise aligned with the interpretive and educational goals of Pinnacles National Park. WNPA provides a paid staff member to run the bookstore operation and contributed over \$5,000 in direct aid to Pinnacles to support programs in FY 2012.

Universities and Research Institutes

Partnerships with universities and research institutes (see list at right) play a crucial role at Pinnacles National Park. These partnerships increase understanding of the park’s cultural and natural resources as well as visitor use. Working with these organizations helps to increase capacity and enhances science-based management decisions that help protect resources and interpret them in accurate and compelling ways.

Conservation Groups

Conservation partners, such as the American Conservation Experience, Student Conservation Association, California Conservation Corps, and the Gabilan Conservation Camp, assist the park with resource management, interpretive programming, and administration. These groups receive the bulk of their funding through the Public Land Corps initiative. The resources they contribute greatly increase what the park can accomplish. For example, the Gabilan Conservation Camp from Soledad Prison helps with labor intensive invasive species removal efforts involving hand hoeing and prescribed burn preparation.

From top: Weighing federally threatened California red-legged frog eggs before transporting them to the reservoir; more than 450 moth species have been recorded at Pinnacles, including this plume moth.

University and Research Institute Partners in FY 2010–FY 2012

- Clemson University
- Institute for Wildlife Studies
- San Francisco Estuary Institute
- San Jose State University
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Santa Cruz
- University of Idaho
- Utah State University
- Ventana Wildlife Society
- Colorado State University
- Los Angeles Zoo
- San Diego Zoo
- Buenos Aires Zoo in Argentina



The Condor Recovery Program

The ongoing recovery of the endangered California condor tells one of the world’s greatest conservation stories. North America’s largest soaring bird, the California condor boasts a wing span of 9.5 feet and average weight of 20 pounds. The California condor narrowly avoided extinction in the early 1980s, when the population hit a low of just 22 birds worldwide. In 1987, the last wild condor was captured and brought into captivity to support breeding programs at the San Diego Wild Animal Park and the Los Angeles Zoo. No California condors lived in the wild until 1992, when the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) released the first captive-bred birds in southern California. Today, captive breeding programs have expanded to include The Peregrine Fund’s World Center for Birds of Prey and the Oregon Zoo.

In 2003, Pinnacles National Park joined the effort to reestablish the California condor population in cooperation with the Ventana Wildlife Society. Initially, Ventana managed the program, but the park’s role, in both managing operations and providing funding, has increased as the years progressed. Pinnacles National Park, the only national park unit that maintains a wild release site, is one of the few places in the world to see California condors today. The condor program at Pinnacles has become an integral component of a recovery program that includes four additional release sites: Big Sur in central California, Hopper Mountain Refuge



Offering non-lead ammunition demonstrations to the local community.

The Condor Recovery Program

Complex in southern California, Vermillion Cliffs in Arizona, and Baja California in Mexico. The Ventana Wildlife Society, USFWS, The Peregrine Fund, and the San Diego Zoo Safari Park in conjunction with the Mexican Government, respectively, manage these four sites. Today, the condor population in central California numbers over 60 birds and the worldwide condor population has grown to more than 400. However, the condor remains imperiled and mortality rates are unsustainably high in adult, juvenile, and nestling birds.

Research studies have shown that the primary cause of mortality in wild condors is lead (Pb) poisoning from the inadvertent ingestion of spent ammunition. California condors are scavengers, feeding only on carrion. When condors and other scavengers feed on animals shot with lead ammunition, they can ingest fragments of lead, leading to illness and death. Education and outreach play a critical role in reducing lead volume on the landscape. In 2006, Pinnacles partnered with the Institute for Wildlife Studies to launch the first comprehensive non-lead outreach efforts in California. Developing educational materials, providing technical expertise, and offering free non-lead ammunition to the hunting and ranching community has raised awareness of this issue. In 2012, Pinnacles partnered with the Ventana Wildlife Society to offer free non-lead ammunition to the local community to reduce lead exposure in California condors.




Strategic Goals

The change from National Monument to National Park status provided Pinnacles with a unique opportunity to refocus the park’s management philosophy and strategy. By fully embracing its elevated status, the park strives to provide a unique national park experience to visitors. To this end, the park has developed the following guiding principle:

*“Showcase the natural and cultural resources that make Pinnacles a premier crown jewel of the National Park Service, creating high-quality experiences that inspire and engage everyone to be true stewards of the park and the values it represents.”*

This grand vision propels Pinnacles forward and provides the foundation for its operating objectives over the next 15–25 years, as outlined in its General Management Plan. The GMP’s preferred alternative emphasizes linking people and resources by connecting diverse audiences to the park, acknowledging the interrelationship between natural and cultural resources, and protecting, preserving, and restoring ecological communities and processes. The park has already made substantial progress toward these objectives, utilized the business planning process to refine its three-to-five year goals, and developed actionable strategies to achieve them. These are outlined below.



### Goal 1: Enhance the Visitor Experience

**Enhance the visitor experience** at Pinnacles to better welcome visitors to the park and create recreational and educational opportunities for diverse user communities.

**Recent Wins:**

- Opened new west side visitor contact station in April 2012
- Completed repairs of Juniper Canyon Trail and climber access routes
- Created presence on social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter
- Began conducting optional Spanish language classes for staff members
- Launched Spanish language version of Pinnacles Junior Ranger Program, and conducted bilingual programs during the park’s busy season

**Moving Forward:**

- Design and develop a virtual museum plan; launch website and create supplementary media
- Expand bilingual ranger programming and develop self-guided visitor services in Spanish and English
- Conduct site planning for east side trails in the Bottomlands and McCabe Canyon
- Develop Long Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) and wayside plans
- Analyze and streamline visitor center payments for permits, concessions, and campground; conduct planning for replacement of east side fee booth
- Create campground improvement needs assessment
- Update entrance signage to reflect National Park status
- Update Search and Rescue and Emergency Medical Service needs assessments and operations plans to ensure service levels adequately provide for visitor safety
- Design and construct trail to connect west side visitor contact station to chaparral area trail network
- Improve methods for collecting and analyzing visitation data



### Goal 2: Optimize Park Operations and Invest in Human Capital

**Optimize park operations and invest in human capital** by fostering an efficient work environment and developing the skills and expertise of park employees.

**Recent Wins:**

- Installed high-speed Internet connection in the east side maintenance facility and the west side buildings, enabling more efficient communication and information systems
- Eliminated one emergency response vehicle resulting in approximately \$3,500 in annual savings
- Launched horse/mule pack stock sharing initiative with Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, resulting in approximately \$6,500 annual savings for the park
- Received Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certificate from the US Green Building Council for the west side visitor contact station
- Created cross-functional team to identify ways to improve employee satisfaction and park-wide communication between supervisors and employees
- Created opportunities for seasonal and permanent staff to provide park management feedback on improving and streamlining operations

**Moving Forward:**

- Improve Individual Development Plans and performance standards for each employee and position type to better align with the park’s strategic goals
- Identify and provide key training opportunities for staff to expand park expertise in the following areas: National Historic Preservation Act, lead contamination issues, performance management, wilderness management and planning, incident command, and defensive driving
- Evaluate, plan, and implement phone and information technology system upgrades
- Increase skills of first line supervisors by providing supervision, management, and leadership training



### Goal 3: Maintain and Protect Park Infrastructure


**Maintain and protect park infrastructure** through effective planning and prioritization of park assets, and by demonstrating sustainable practices.

**Recent Wins:**

- Relocated and replaced flood-prone west side maintenance and visitor facilities
- Replaced west side housing
- Replaced substandard east side maintenance warehouse and office building
- Completed stabilization of Bear Valley Hall to ensure long-term protection of newly-acquired cultural resource
- Removed lead-based paint from North Chalone Peak Fire Lookout Tower to prevent wildlife poisoning and resource contamination
- Finalized housing management plan

**Moving Forward:**

- Regularly review and update Facilities Management Software System (FMSS) data to accurately reflect current asset status
- Develop and implement best practices for managing compliance
- Develop Bottomlands concept plan for visitor use and resource protection
- Improve structural fire protection program
- Develop park-wide facility development style guide
- Complete site planning for campground and Bottomlands areas, located on the east side of the park
- Rehabilitate historic Bear Valley School, stabilize and rehabilitate the historic Butterflied Barn



### Goal 4: Protect Park Cultural and Natural Resources

**Protect park cultural and natural resources** through continued protection efforts, public outreach, and cooperation with key partners.

**Recent Wins:**

- Completed the Pinnacles National Park General Management Plan
- Coordinated with condor recovery groups to provide non-lead bullets and information to local hunters and San Benito County residents
- Established a formal partnership with the Amah Mutsun Tribal band, the first of its kind at Pinnacles; collaborated with the tribe and the University of California to research habitat restoration and traditional land management techniques, work for which the tribe received the 2012 National Hartzog Group Volunteer Award
- Completed Chaparral area re-vegetation project and began multi-year Bottomlands restoration project
- Expanded pig fence and eradicated feral pigs, a chief cause of resource degradation within the park
- Developed cross-divisional resource protection priorities to guide future operations
- Decreased 83 percent of the park’s backlog of museum specimen curation and upgraded museum facility building for pest-free environment
- Completed research on the traditional use of fire in the ecosystem, working with the Amah Mutsun Tribal band and fire agency professionals

**Moving Forward:**

- Complete lead removal in former firing range located in Grassy Canyon
- Identify and implement mechanisms for external research partners to share scientific results from studies conducted at Pinnacles
- Use external and internal research to develop educational and interpretive programming and information for the public
- Enhance data collection on pig fence maintenance and effectiveness; use data to identify strategies for improving maintenance efficiency and effectiveness; remove unneeded fencing from designated wilderness areas
- Increase invasive plant and pig fence volunteer program capacity
- Identify, implement, and share strategies for effective invasive plant control
- Complete wilderness stewardship plans that include strategies to remove non-conforming uses from wilderness areas
- Identify and delineate critical habitat areas in high visitor use areas (i.e. campground and Bear Gulch picnic area)
- Identify and compete for funding to implement unfunded resource protection priorities, such as decreasing wildlife roadkill, improving protection of maternal bat colony in Bear Gulch Cave, and increasing “Keep Wildlife Wild” program activities and outreach in the campground
- Complete National Historic Register nominations for two historic archeological resource areas: the Lyons Homestead and the Melville Mining District



### Goal 5: Develop and Sustain Relationships with Community Groups and Key Partners

**Develop and sustain relationships with community groups and key partners** through continued public engagement and strategic cooperation, and coordination with the park’s friends group.

**Recent Wins:**

- Expanded involvement with local community events including the Hollister Saddle Horse Show Parade, San Benito High School Career Fair, Monterey Job Fair, and San Benito County Fair
- Hosted biannual BBQs for southern San Benito County residents to increase information sharing with park neighbors
- Held youth events including a night hike for the “Let’s Move Outside” initiative, a program sponsored by the Department of Interior and First Lady Michelle Obama
- Participated with the San Benito Working Landscape Group to foster neighborly ties with local community and better understand ways to connect people with resources that benefit working landscapes, habitats, and wildlife
- Established formal agreement with Monterey and San Benito County Sheriff Departments for cooperative law enforcement support

**Moving Forward:**

- Market Pinnacles Partnership (PIPA), the park’s “friend’s group,” prominently to visitors
- Increase PIPA’s revenue generating capability at the park through donations, membership drives, and other opportunities
- Work closely with new PIPA leadership to define goals and priorities for the partnership
- Expand opportunities for youth programming related to the park and the outdoors in surrounding communities
- Strengthen relationship with the San Benito Working Landscapes Group to assist with open working landscape preservation as appropriate
- Strengthen ties with “Gateway” community leaders including Hollister, Soledad, and King City to participate in development planning outside of park boundaries to support protection of resource values and visitor experiences

Strategic Goals (continued)



West side panorama.



Funding Sources and Expenditures

Funding Sources and Expenditures

During FY 2012 Pinnacles expended a total of \$4.4 million. Funding for these expenditures comes from four key categories.

**Appropriated Base:** Appropriated base, referred to as ONPS (Operation of the National Park System), is the most important and reliable source of funding for Pinnacles National Park. Appropriated annually by Congress, the park’s base budget funds regular recurring operations. In FY 2012, Pinnacles’ appropriated base budget totaled \$3,473,000. A small portion of this funding (\$55,000 in FY 2012) goes towards regional assessments, or shared pools of funding that support parks in a given region. After assessments, nearly 85 percent of the appropriated base budget at Pinnacles funds park staff and approximately 66 percent funds permanent employees, commitments which limit the short-term flexibility of these funds.

Pinnacles received a base budget increase in FY 2008 to manage its condor recovery program, as well as an increase in FY 2010 to control invasive species and maintain a 32-mile pig fence to protect park resources from feral pig intrusion. With these increases, Pinnacles’ appropriated base budget grew 41 percent from FY 2007 to FY 2010, a real increase of 35 percent when accounting for inflation. Since FY 2010, though, the park has seen reductions in base funding even though operational responsibilities for new programs, lands, and facilities have grown. Base funding decreased by 3.6 percent in FY 2012, and in FY 2013, sequestration, an automatic federal budget reduction, triggered an additional 6.0 percent cut in base funding. In real terms, this amounts to a 15 percent decrease since FY 2010, negating years of budgetary gains and bringing spending power back below FY 2008 levels. To mitigate the impact of these sustained funding decreases, Pinnacles has eliminated permanent positions in favor of seasonal and temporary staff, and invested in volunteers and partnerships that support park operations.

Funding Sources and Expenditures (continued)

**Revenues:** Revenues at Pinnacles include donations, entrance fees, concession franchise fees, and fees related to special use permits, commercial tours, and commercial use authorizations. In addition to covering the administrative costs of these fee programs, Pinnacles uses the revenues collected from these sources to fund projects that enhance the visitor experience, increase access to the park, create a safe and healthy visitor environment, restore habitats, and improve efficiency of its fee collection operation. In FY 2012 revenue sources contributed \$356,000 to the park’s annual budget.

**Reimbursables:** Reimbursable funds result from cost-recovery for goods or services provided to other agencies or organizations such as the Federal Highway Authority, General Services Administration (GSA), and park concessioners. This fund category also includes rent collected for park-provided staff housing. Reimbursable funds account for the smallest portion of Pinnacles’ yearly budget, totaling \$195,000 in FY 2012.

**Appropriated Non-base:** Appropriated non-base funding, often called project funds, is allocated by Congress to support special projects and capital expenditures, and awarded on a competitive basis at the national and regional levels among all NPS units. Most project funds come from the ONPS and Construction appropriations. As the result of a proactive management team that prioritized the project funding process, Pinnacles has successfully secured project money through appropriated non-base funds in recent years. After the 2008–2009 financial crisis, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) brought large amounts of project funding that enabled Pinnacles to replace and upgrade visitor contact facilities, replace worn-out housing units for park staff, and relocate maintenance facilities out of flood-prone areas. Additionally, these new facilities brought upgraded energy technology into the park, allowing Pinnacles to generate its entire west side energy supply from a photovoltaic system and backup generator. Significant projects accomplished from FY 2008 to FY 2012 include:

- Relocation and replacement of flood-prone west side maintenance and visitor facilities (\$7,896,280–ARRA)
- Removal and replacement of west side housing (\$1,803,181–ARRA)
- Completion of campground upgrade, including roads, swimming pool, electrical system, and water well replacement (\$961,357)
- Replacement of substandard east side maintenance warehouse and office building (\$543,869)
- Eradication of feral pigs and completion and expansion of the pig fence, (\$662,154–ARRA) and protection of recently acquired sensitive new lands from feral pigs (\$325,049)
- Interagency Joint Fire Science Project to explore the traditional use of fire along the California Central Coast (\$245,390)
- California condor ecosystem restoration (in partnership with the Institute for Wildlife Studies), National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant (\$228,000)
- Risk assessment of non-lead environmental contaminant exposure to California condors (\$222,350)

Despite Pinnacles’ historical success securing project funds, appropriated non-base funding is less stable than appropriated base funding and can swing significantly between years. In FY 2012 appropriated non-base funding totaled \$473,000, considerably below FY 2008–2011 levels.



Division Allocations

Division Allocations

Pinnacles National Park has five divisions—Research and Resource Management, Management and Administration, Facility Operations and Maintenance, Interpretation and Education, and Visitor and Resource Protection. The Facility Operations and Maintenance and the Research and Resource Management divisions account for the largest proportion of park expenditures each year. The Visitor and Resource Protection, Management and Administration, and Interpretation and Education divisions typically have smaller budgets.

Regardless of each division’s total allocated funding, Pinnacles management and staff work collaboratively to support park priorities. Maintenance and monitoring of the pig fence provides one example of cross-divisional collaboration. The Facility Operations and Maintenance division and the Research and Resource Management division pool staff and resources to maintain the pig fence and quickly resolve any breaches.



Left: Volcanic spires reach skyward atop the High Peaks.  
Below: The newly constructed west side visitor contact station.



Research and Resource Management

Division at a Glance

The Research and Resource Management division (RRM or Resources) focuses on protecting the park’s natural and cultural resources for the enjoyment of current and future generations through scientific research, academic and community partnerships, cross-division engagement, and public outreach. As a part of this mission, RRM conducts research to better understand and protect the resources at Pinnacles, identifies risks associated with park operations, and implements appropriate mitigation strategies that minimize impacts on park resources. The division also coordinates research activities conducted by outside entities.

An established network of partners contributes to the division’s accomplishments. In the past five years, the division has secured nearly \$2 million in outside project funding, leveraging limited resources to build key programs in habitat restoration, condor research and outreach, and cultural resource management.

Scientific Research and Monitoring

Scientific research informs management decision making throughout the park and across divisions. RRM staff and partners conduct scientific research on park vegetation, wildlife, and habitats, both past and present. For example, ethnobotany research informs the interpretive programs about the ways in which tribal groups managed the oak savanna, chaparral, and grassland landscapes over millennia, while inventory and monitoring programs help maintenance crews and contractors understand the impacts of their actions on resources and the environmental risks associated with park projects. RRM maintains an active inventory and monitoring program, focusing on air quality, raptors, bats, habitat restoration treatments, and vegetation response to pig impacts. These efforts are augmented by partnerships with local and national experts who research and inventory park wildlife and vegetation.

RRM also partners with youth and volunteer organizations such as the California Conservation Corps, American Conservation Experience, and the Student Conservation Association. Youth volunteers complete valuable work while also gaining job skills and education.

Interdivisional Collaboration

RRM engages across divisions to achieve park-wide goals. Members of the RRM’s Condor Crew, Raptor Monitoring team, and Habitat Restoration team collaborate with the Visitor and Resource Protection division to provide technical search and rescue assistance to park visitors. An interdisciplinary group of Facility Operations and Maintenance and RRM employees monitor a 32-mile pig fence that prevents feral pigs from causing ecological damage within the park. The RRM team also partners with the Facility Operations and Maintenance division to monitor and maintain historic and cultural sites located throughout the park. Additionally, RRM team members provide educational programming in conjunction with the Interpretation and Education division, and share scientific information and expertise with interpretive rangers throughout the year.



Research and Resource Management (continued)

Highlights and Challenges

Unique among National Park units, Pinnacles operates and maintains a crew dedicated to the protection, reintroduction, and monitoring of the California condor. The park works with local partners and community members to promote the continued health and well-being of the California condor. The condor crew attaches active GPS units and radio telemetry tags on the condors to monitor the critically endangered bird. The crew performs routine medical exams (in partnership with zoos and veterinarians) and provides basic treatment for sick birds. Critical outreach efforts include the park’s non-lead ammunition education program.

In addition to its bountiful natural resources, Pinnacles has important cultural resources that illuminate the lifestyles of traditionally associated peoples, including Native Americans and homesteaders. With no dedicated cultural resource specialists on staff, managing these resources is a challenge. Nevertheless, the park has made great strides in this area in recent years. Through a collection of historical ranching documentation and oral history interviews along with ongoing studies on the cultural use of fire to manage landscapes, research at Pinnacles contributes to a growing knowledge about how people have influenced the land over time. Active engagement with traditionally associated people plays a vital role in the effective management of the park’s resources and the proper telling of its stories.

Another important component of RRM’s work is community outreach and partnerships. Since the park’s ecosystem stretches beyond its boundaries, RRM staff works with neighbors to find mutually beneficial ways to enhance habitats and encourage compatible land uses, while respecting private landowners’ needs, rights, and traditions.



*Pinnacles provides habitat to three federally protected species: the California tiger salamander, the California red-legged frog, and the California condor.*

Research and Resource Management (continued)

Condor Program Budget and FTE

A central focus of Research and Resource Management operations, condor program-related expenditures accounted for 29 percent of the division’s total budget in FY 2012. The condor crew worked the equivalent 5.0 FTEs in FY 2012. The condor program also utilized 7,800 hours of volunteer labor in FY 2012.



*Working with volunteers and tribal partners to manage culturally important plants.*



*A California Condor Recovery Team member tests the lead level in a sample of condor blood.*



Management and Administration

Division at a Glance

The Management and Administration division (Administration) provides administrative support services necessary to all park operations including finance and budget execution, human resources, contracting and procurement, housing and property, and information technology (IT). The Administration division oversees the park’s operational partnerships with the SHRO and MABO, to ensure that hiring and purchasing are efficient and effective. The division also works closely with two regional employees who provide IT and budget support from remote locations.

The division includes the Superintendent, who provides overall park leadership and vision. The Superintendent provides operational oversight, interprets and implements national and regional policy at the park, ensures fair and equitable management of the park’s human resources and finances, and forges key relationships with park partners and supporters.

Finance and Budget Execution

In 2011, the park transitioned most accounting operations to a regional budget analyst responsible for three parks’ budgets. However, because the budget analyst is not always involved in management team discussions, division staff retain responsibility for some budgeting tasks. Even with these unique challenges, the park has had an overall positive experience with this shared external budget analyst structure.

Human Resources

The park works with the Klamath/Bay Area Servicing Human Resources Office to process all aspects of hiring. This transition took place in 2012 and has resulted in both increased efficiencies and new challenges for the park. One SHRO employee is based at Pinnacles, giving the park direct access to the network. However, the remaining 17 employees in the SHRO work at other parks in the area, increasing communication challenges. Moreover, the park’s atypical visitor season requires advanced planning with the SHRO in order to hire seasonal staff in the winter and early spring, and the park has had seasonal operations hamstrung by hiring delays in the past.

Contracting and Procurement

Administration staff work with the Major Acquisition Buying Office to issue all contracts and purchase orders for the park. Created in 2009, the MABO serves nine park units in the region. In addition to coordinating with the MABO, staff review statements of work for supplies, materials, and contracted services.

Housing and Property

Division staff oversee inventories and maintenance of personal property records and bill employees when liability is determined. Division staff also set rental rates for housing units and manage rental agreements with resident employees. Additionally, division staff collect utility payments and arrange for repairs and maintenance of units when vacated.

Information Technology Systems

Administration staff maintain local area networks that support communication and data storage. The division receives IT support from the Pacific West Regional Office, and from a shared park employee, based at Rosie the Riveter National Historical Park. With this support, the park has successfully completed several IT system upgrades in recent years. With sequestration and reduced travel ceilings, the employee was not able to visit the park as frequently in FY 2012, which led to significant delays in installing new computers and setting up a T1 data line.

Highlights and Challenges

The Administration division has one of the more experienced and stable workforces at Pinnacles, and this amount of baseline knowledge contributes to the division’s accomplishments. Over the last few years, the division has successfully adapted to new budget, HR, and IT systems, including the Financial and Business Management System (FBMS).

Recent structural changes to administrative support functions mean that many of the division’s responsibilities now rely on external offices and employees. This has impacted every division in the park, and increases the need for communication and strong leadership. Administration division staff must diligently manage and develop these relationships. With each network office involving a different set of parks and protocols, finding ways to streamline administrative processes represents one of the division’s primary challenges.

Management and Administration (continued)



Right: Pinnacles Administration staff are always happy to help. Below: Park staff at the grand opening of the west side visitor contact station.





Facility Operations and Maintenance

Division at a Glance

The Facility Operations and Maintenance division (Facilities) has the challenging responsibility of managing and maintaining the park’s diverse portfolio of assets. Park assets fall within the following five groups: roads and parking lots, trails, grounds, utilities, and buildings. Additional division responsibilities include fleet management, environmental management for hazardous waste, project planning and design, and management of sustainability initiatives.

The Facilities division is organized into two branches: Trails & Fence and Buildings & Utilities. Division employees conduct annual inspections and maintenance on all park assets, focusing on three categories of work: preventative, operational, and recurring.

- *Preventative work* includes any activities that reinforce the safety and security of an asset in the park. Examples of such work include updating the electrical system to extend the useful life of the east side visitor center and cutting vegetation back from the roadsides to maintain travel corridors and reduce wildland fire danger.
- *Operational work* relates to overseeing the systems and equipment used to keep facilities functional and staff safe. Such work includes managing the park’s utilities (water, sewer, electrical, and telecommunication systems), visitor shuttle service, and vehicle fleet.
- *Recurring work* includes many types of regularly-scheduled maintenance that take place seasonally or throughout the year. Such work includes cleaning chimneys and gutters, trash removal, and monitoring the pig fence.

The division prioritizes projects that serve the mission of preserving and protecting the park’s natural and cultural resources. When Facilities is unable to complete regular recurring work due to staff or budget constraints, the forgone work becomes deferred maintenance. Addressing the park’s backlog of deferred maintenance, currently exceeding \$10 million, presents a constant challenge. Given the current budget climate and historical gaps between maintenance needs and available funding, this backlog will continue to grow for the foreseeable future. Facilities prioritizes deferred maintenance based on asset condition and importance to park visitation, resource protection, and operations. This allows the division to reduce the most critical deferred maintenance as funds become available. The park classifies over 90 percent of its assets as requiring low maintenance in the next year, allowing management to focus resources on top priority assets in critical condition. The current deferred maintenance backlog for this subset of park assets totals \$1.4 million.

*Since FY 2002, the staff composition of the division has shifted, with increases in the number of seasonal and permanent subject-to-furlough employees and decreases in the number of permanent full-time employees. This shift has helped the division absorb budget reductions, while better reflecting the seasonal nature of the work.*

Since 2004, the park has increased its total assets from 112 to 202, a 80 percent increase. The approximate replacement value of all park assets now exceeds \$135 million.



From top: A Pinnacles maintenance crew repairs a dirt road in Grassy Canyon; construction of the maintenance and housing facilities for the West Side Development Project; maintenance crew members attend to a fallen tree; maintenance crew members tending to the pig fence.

Right: Feral pigs rooting in the campground prior to completion of the pig fence.

Facility Operations and Maintenance (continued)

Highlights and Challenges

Facilities has recently completed a number of projects that maintain and protect park assets and enhance the visitor experience. These projects include the west side visitor contact station, staff housing reconstruction, and the installation of a state-of-the-art photovoltaic system. Facilities also completed the expanded pig fence installation in 2010 and fence extension in 2011. Since then, the division has maintained the integrity of the fence in the face of rising costs and reduced budgets with help from RRM and a devoted volunteer corps.

External factors such as extreme temperatures and topography add layers of complexity to the division’s work, and IT capacity constraints present additional challenges. Two internal areas the division has targeted for improvement are project management and environmental compliance processing systems. While the park has successfully secured project funding in recent years, the division has at times lacked the capacity to manage compliance and update FMSS data in a timely manner, which can ultimately derail the park’s ability to use funding.

Nonetheless, the division has managed the park’s infrastructure to a high standard. In FY 2013, over 97 percent of visitors were satisfied with the facilities at Pinnacles, a testament to the hard work of the Facility Operations and Maintenance staff. Looking forward, major projects planned for the next five years include upgrading the waterline and storage at the campground; building a trail connection from the Chaparral Ranger Station to the west side visitor contact station; stabilizing the historic Butterfield Barn; preserving the historic Bear Valley School; and upgrading the Bear Gulch sewer system.





Interpretation and Education

Division at a Glance

The Interpretation and Education division (Interpretation) is the primary public-facing division at Pinnacles National Park. The Interpretation division orients visitors to and within the park, manages fee collection, provides educational programming, supplies information on visitor activities and safety, interfaces with stewards outside the park, and is responsible for providing information to the public and the media.

Visitation to Pinnacles has increased steadily since 2006, with the park welcoming over 200,000 visitors in each of the last three years. Pinnacles’ elevation to national park status in January 2013 brought the park increased public exposure and an additional uptick in visitation. Furthermore, visitors entering the west side of the park now have access to a state-of-the-art visitor facility, dedicated in April 2012, complete with bilingual exhibits.

Education

The Interpretation division plans and coordinates educational programming for the public throughout the year within the park and at events in the surrounding communities. Interpretation staff partner with scientists from the Research and Resource Management division to provide educational programs about the wildlife and vegetation at Pinnacles National Park. Inside the park, interpretive staff offer curriculum-based education programs and formal interpretive ranger talks and guided hikes. In conjunction with the opening of the west side visitor contact station, the park expanded interpretive programming into the Salinas Valley, reaching a more diverse audience. Interpretive staff organize a summer speaker series in the park and in the community of Soledad. This series focuses on the people of California, park natural resources, and climate change.

Public Outreach

Interpretive staff members coordinate with partner organizations, including the Pinnacles Partnership and local chambers of commerce, to promote the park and expand awareness of interpretive programs. The park engages with Pinnacles Partnership, local schools and teachers to run Camp Pinnacles, an overnight science education program that provides fourth grade students with immersion activities focused on the park’s natural and cultural resources. Division staff also offer bilingual interpretive programs to local Spanish-speaking populations. Recently, the Pinnacles interpretive team expanded its online presence on Facebook and Twitter to reach younger audiences, with plans to expand into other social media platforms soon.

Interns and Volunteers

The Interpretation division relies heavily on interns at the park in order to provide programming and interpretive services throughout the year. In partnership with the Student Conservation Association and American Conservation Experience, the Interpretation division uses interns to help produce and deliver new programs to diverse park audiences. Volunteers recruited from the National Park Service Volunteers-in-Parks program also provide ranger services at the park’s visitor centers. A part-time volunteer coordinator at Pinnacles helps to organize volunteer efforts in the park.

Fee Collection

The division also manages the fee collection operations at Pinnacles. Rangers greet visitors and collect entrance fees at east and west side contact and entrance stations, as well as the east side visitor center. As the division only seasonally staffs its visitor contact stations, the park also uses honor boxes located at both visitor centers. In addition to entrance fees, the division is also responsible for issuing permits for special events, group tours, and commercial use authorizations.

In FY 2012, the park collected \$165,214 in revenue related to these fees.

Clockwise from top left (next page): Children salute the flag at the grand opening ceremony for the west side visitor contact station; a park ranger talks with scouts at a geology booth at the Pinnacles National Park rededication ceremony; wayside exhibits interpret park resources along roads and trails; Bear Gulch Reservoir is a popular destination for ranger-led hikes.



Interpretation and Education (continued)

Highlights and Challenges

Prior to FY 2012, Pinnacles organized Interpretation activities under the Visitor and Resource Protection division without a dedicated chief of Interpretation. In 2013, the park’s updated enabling legislation broadened the scope of interpretive themes beyond the park’s unique geological features, to include cultural resources, condors, and unique ecological features. In order to manage this expanded set of interpretive activities, the park hired a Chief of Interpretation and formed a dedicated Interpretation division. The division is developing new programming to expand its educational services and create opportunities to engage visitors using innovative offerings. In the future, the Interpretation division will revise its Long Range Interpretive Plan to provide a strong foundation and guiding vision for interpretive and educational programming at Pinnacles.

While Latinos comprise over 55 percent of the total population in San Benito and Monterey Counties, they represented an estimated eight percent of total park visitation in 2012. The division has prioritized bilingual programming and public outreach efforts to better connect this demographic group to Pinnacles National Park.

Pinnacles hires a relatively large seasonal interpretive staff in the spring to meet visitor needs. This requires careful planning and advanced coordination with the SHRO. In recent years, the division has had to make these hiring decisions before final budget allocations were set. Additionally, the lack of a lead interpretive ranger leaves the Chief of Interpretation to conduct on-boarding and training, taking focus away from other important management activities.

The lack of road connectivity between the east and west sides of the park creates visitor orientation problems. Visitors commonly arrive at one side of the park, intending to cross through the park to the other side, not realizing there is no road through the park. Hikers also often mistakenly end up on the side of the park opposite their vehicle. More waysides and clearer signage might improve visitor orientation.

Fee collection also poses a challenge. Limited staff capacity, lack of credit card-processing technology, visitor disorientation, and noncompliance create significant obstacles to fee collection, limiting this potential source of revenue for park projects.



Visitor and Resource Protection

Division at a Glance

The Visitor and Resource Protection division (VRP) is responsible for protecting all visitors, staff, and natural and cultural resources in the park. The division works closely with local county and state law enforcement, emergency services, and fire departments to share information and resources, and to provide seamless public safety services across multiple jurisdictions. VRP functions in five service areas: Search and Rescue (SAR), Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Law Enforcement (LE), Structural and Wild-land Fire Management, and Wilderness Protection. Additionally, the division manages the concessions contract with campground operator Royal Elk Park Management. The division has earned a “friendly ranger” reputation among staff and visitors because of its depth of expertise and willingness to provide assistance.

The beautiful views and abundant recreation opportunities afforded throughout the park attract a wide variety of visitors predominately from the area’s urban centers. Many of these visitors lack familiarity with wilderness areas and the unique characteristics of Pinnacles, making VRP’s year-round response capabilities all the more important. VRP rangers manage over 700 incidents per year, ranging from heat-related emergencies and climbing injuries requiring technical rope skills, to trespasses at sensitive condor facilities and arrests pursuant to state warrants. The division also assists other emergency response agencies in south San Benito County on motor vehicle crashes, wildland fires, serious injuries on local ranches, and marijuana eradication efforts on state and BLM land. Assisting visitors who end up on the opposite side of the park as their vehicle ends up being one of the more time consuming incidents for the division, as the drive from one side to the other takes over an hour.



A Pinnacles ranger greets a junior ranger.

Highlights and Challenges

The team faces many challenges in protecting park visitors and resources given the rugged and varied terrain, multiple entry points, and limited staff resources. On the west side, an automatic security gate helps keep day-use visitors out after hours. The east side is not gated during night-time hours, and the campground lands acquisition in 2006 increased the VRP patrol area. In recent years, staff capacity constraints have prevented the division from conducting any off-trail or boundary patrols, and only allowed for limited trail patrols. Boundary marking is limited or nonexistent in many places, even in areas with previously documented incidents of vehicles trespassing into designated wilderness.

Commissioned law enforcement rangers and preventative search and rescue (PSAR) volunteers conduct regular patrols to educate visitors regarding safety and regulations in the park. This preventative work helps to reduce SAR, EMS, wildland fire and law enforcement calls, keeping the number of serious emergencies relatively low. Rangers participate in training that increases skill sets in all five service areas so that each staff member can respond to a variety of life-threatening emergencies. With VRP staff shortages in recent years due to sequestration and employee turnover, the division has increasingly relied on RRM staff members, many of whom are seasoned climbers and keep up on ropes skills for condor cliff nesting activities, to play a critical part of the SAR team. RRM staff plan and conduct SAR training for the rest of park staff and are able to assist in emergency rescues when available.

Wildland fire safety remains a challenge in San Benito County given the low average rainfall, extreme summer temperatures, and fire-prone chaparral ecosystem. VRP works with other national park units to prevent fires by cutting back vegetation and conducting prescribed burns. VRP has cultivated a mutually beneficial relationship with CalFire and local fire response units in order to respond as a team in case a fire threatens the park boundaries.

Pinnacles does not have its own dispatch operations, instead relying on services based in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Dispatch services facilitate the safety and security of employees and visitors through efficient communication for routine park operations and emergency incidents. Staff must check in with dispatch before beginning shifts, especially if work involves backcountry travel or law enforcement. Radio dispatch is even more important at Pinnacles because there is no reliable cell phone service inside the park boundaries.

Visitor and Resource Protection (continued)

As is the case with other divisions at Pinnacles, VRP works closely with RRM, Interpretation, and Facilities divisions to monitor safety and respond to emergencies. VRP staff are traditionally permanent full-time with occasional support from seasonal and special appointments. At current staffing levels, which have been constrained by funding shortages as well as hiring challenges, VRP can cover less than 50 percent of daylight hours with no scheduled coverage after dark. This means many visitor incidents take place without ranger staff on duty. Rangers are available via call out, and there is a ranger in residence on both the east and west sides of the park. However, over the past few years, rangers have regularly had to respond to incidents occurring on the opposite side of the park, or determine that the incident is not severe enough to warrant response.



Technical rescue training prepares staff for responding to rock climbing emergencies.



Appropriated Base Budget Scenarios

Appropriated Base Budget Scenarios

This section describes several potential budget scenarios and the corresponding impacts on park operations. The funding projections are estimates for strategic planning purposes, and are not meant to communicate the intent of future congressional appropriations.

The park explored three base budget funding scenarios for FY 2014 through FY 2018:

**(a) Best Case:** Base funding is restored to FY 2012 levels, then remains flat through FY 2018.

**(b) Expected Case:** Base funding drops 2.1 percent in FY 2014, then remains flat through FY 2018. This budget scenario reflects management’s estimate of how continued sequestration under the Budget Control Act would impact the park’s base budget in FY 2014.

**(c) Worst Case:** Base funding drops 2.1 percent in FY 2014, followed by an additional 5 percent in FY 2015, then remains flat through FY 2018.

Since park base funding is subject to regional assessments and transfers to other parks for shared services, the following annual assumptions apply to each funding scenario:

- One percent annual regional assessments for park contingency funds and shared Permanent Change of Station (PCS) funds
- \$15,000 annual uniform payment
- \$17,000 annual transfer to Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park for shared IT services, starting in FY 2015
- \$21,000 annual transfer to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks for shared dispatch-related personnel and maintenance costs

On the expenditure side, the following assumptions drive the baseline operating projections:

- Personnel expenses are based on management’s optimal FY 2014 staffing plan, which brings the number of base-funded FTE to 38.1, filling several critical vacancies in order to achieve high-priority park goals. The projections do not include any additional hiring above these levels.
- Salary costs grow with projected step increases and reflect a one percent annual pay cost increase
- Non-personnel expenses return to FY 2012 levels and grow at three percent annually thereafter, to reflect anticipated inflationary impacts

The following chart and table demonstrate that with moderate levels of inflation and regular employee advancement up the pay schedules, even the most optimistic scenario—a return to FY 2012 funding levels—leaves the park with a projected deficit as soon as FY 2015. Under lower allocations, the park projects a deficit in FY 2014, necessitating immediate cost-saving actions and causing major impacts on park operations. Beyond FY 2014, all three funding scenarios require the management team to consider structural changes that will maintain focus on park priorities while addressing projected shortfalls.

Appropriated Base Budget Scenarios (continued)

Pinnacles National Park—Base Budget Projections  
Projected Finances FY 2012–FY 2018

(all dollar figures in thousands)

	FY 2012 (Actual)	FY 2013 (Estimate)	FY 2014 (Projected)	FY 2015 (Projected)	FY 2016 (Projected)	FY 2017 (Projected)	FY 2018 (Projected)
Base Funding (after assessments)							
Best Case: restored to FY 2012 levels, then flat through FY 2018	\$3,418	\$3,217	\$3,418	\$3,402	\$3,402	\$3,402	\$3,402
Expected Case: drops 2.1% in FY 2014, then flat through FY 2018	\$3,418	\$3,217	\$3,143	\$3,127	\$3,127	\$3,127	\$3,127
Worst Case: drops 2.1% in FY 2014, 5% in FY 2015, then flat through FY 2018	\$3,418	\$3,217	\$3,143	\$2,969	\$2,969	\$2,969	\$2,969

Expenditures							
Personnel							
Research and Resource Management	\$772	\$705	\$731	\$757	\$772	\$790	\$808
Management and Administration	\$514	\$486	\$487	\$477	\$487	\$494	\$503
Facility Operations and Maintenance	\$723	\$701	\$716	\$727	\$746	\$758	\$767
Interpretation and Education	\$364	\$378	\$464	\$471	\$476	\$484	\$489
Visitor and Resource Protection	\$517	\$470	\$467	\$477	\$493	\$506	\$513
Total Personnel	\$2,890	\$2,740	\$2,865	\$2,909	\$2,975	\$3,033	\$3,080
Total Non-personnel	\$528	\$477	\$544	\$560	\$577	\$594	\$612
Total Expenditures	\$3,418	\$3,217	\$3,409	\$3,469	\$3,552	\$3,627	\$3,692

Projected Surplus/(Deficit)						
Best Case		\$9	(\$67)	(\$150)	(\$225)	(\$290)
Expected Case		(\$266)	(\$342)	(\$425)	(\$500)	(\$565)
Worst Case		(\$266)	(\$500)	(\$583)	(\$658)	(\$723)



Primary Cost Drivers

Primary Cost Drivers

**Permanent staff:** Permanent employee salaries and benefits represent the park’s largest expense, at 66 percent of appropriated base budget in FY 2012. This level is slightly higher than the park’s peer group average of 63 percent.<sup>1</sup> Opportunities to reduce permanent personnel costs are generally limited to retirements or other vacancies. Consequently, personnel decisions, particularly those related to permanent positions, are crucial to the park’s long-term financial stability.

Some additional cost drivers are largely beyond the park’s control. These include:

- **Inflation:** While the costs of utilities, equipment, supplies, and contracted services may rise over time, the park’s budget may not, thus limiting purchasing power. The cumulative effect of inflation from FY 2010 to FY 2013 has reduced the purchasing power of a dollar by an estimated 5.8 percent, meaning Pinnacles needed a commensurate budget increase of 5.8 percent just to keep up with the pace of inflation. Instead, the park’s budget decreased by 9.4 percent between FY 2010 and FY 2013.
- **Congressionally-mandated salary increases:** Congress typically grants federal employees annual pay increases, ranging from 1–2.5 percent. Although a freeze has been in effect since FY 2009, the President issued an Executive Order in December 2013 that increases rates of pay for federal workers by one percent, effective January 2014.
- **Within-grade pay increases:** Separate from the mandatory salary increases mentioned above, federal compensation follows a grade and step pay system. With good performance, an employee is eligible for a step increase in salary each year, every other year, or every third year, depending on their tenure. These increases range from 2.5 to 3.5 percent, depending on an employee’s step and grade.
- **Pay locality:** Federal employee salaries are subject to locality pay adjustments, to reflect varying costs of living across the country. The locality for Pinnacles is the San Jose-San Francisco-Oakland area, the highest pay in the country.
- **Support costs:** Many positions require specific equipment and training certifications. These support costs can vary dramatically depending on the position. For example, new law enforcement rangers carry high support

<sup>1</sup>This peer group includes other medium-sized, natural-resource based park units such as Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve, Badlands National Park, and Lava Beds National Monument. While each park in the peer group faces different operational challenges, they provide context to help a park to interpret its performance and operational metrics.



Flood waters cascade down beside Bear Gulch Dam.

costs, including 17 weeks of training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) followed by an 11-week field assignment at another park. Pinnacles will lose one permanent full-time ranger to FLETC for six months in FY 2014, despite continuing to fund the position, in addition to the training and travel costs. VRP also requires a minimum of 40 hours of basic refresher training per year for all division staff, plus advanced training in many areas to meet national standards.

Strategies for Cost Reduction and Operational Efficiency

Pinnacles National Park is committed to streamlining operations and reducing costs, regardless of future budget scenarios. However, it is important to differentiate between operational improvements spread out over several years and the shock of an abrupt appropriated base budget decrease. Any significant budget reduction will require the park to make difficult decisions related to staffing, visitor services, resource protection, and asset management. The park will prioritize these decisions in a way that minimizes potential impacts on park resources and visitor experience.

Strategies for Reducing Costs

Introduce a Strategic Approach to Staffing

With two-thirds of its base funding allocated to permanent personnel, Pinnacles has limited flexibility to accommodate budget reductions. Based on the projections outlined in the prior section, permanent personnel costs as a share of Pinnacles’ expected base budget will reach 75 percent by FY 2015 and 80 percent by FY 2018. Such levels leave the park with inadequate funds for critical seasonal staff and non-personnel expenditures—utilities, supplies, equipment, contracted services, and training. The park can gain much-needed budget flexibility by:

- ➖ Reevaluating positions, divisions, and functions when employee retirement and vacancies present opportunities for reorganization and restructuring. Over the next three years, the park must move towards a sustainable organizational structure; one that reflects management’s top priorities and remains within expected budget constraints.
- ➖ Identifying best alternatives to permanent full-time and permanent subject-to-furlough commitments, and effectively utilizing part-time, seasonal, and term workforces where appropriate across all divisions, particularly in Facilities, Visitor Resource Protection, and Interpretation, where the workload tends to be more seasonal in nature.
- ➖ Monitoring overtime hours across all divisions. In FY 2012, the park spent over \$25,000 on overtime, largely due to understaffing in the VRP division. As budgets constrict, reductions in staff can increase overtime costs, creating a counterproductive budget drain that will require proactive management to mitigate. With careful planning, additional spending on seasonal employees could reduce overtime needs to the point where the park realizes net savings.
- ➖ Reducing the level of monetary awards. In FY 2012, the park expended more than \$22,000 in monetary awards. The management team has made employee satisfaction and retention top priorities and will develop alternate structures for recognizing and rewarding outstanding employee performance.
- ➖ Reducing spending for Sunday and holiday pay premiums by shortening hours or closing certain park facilities on those days with low expected visitation. In FY 2012, the park paid employees over \$50,000 in pay premiums for Sunday and holiday coverage, largely in the Interpretation and VRP divisions. Certain Sundays and holidays, particularly those in winter months, have historically had very low visitation and would be good targets for premium-pay cost savings.

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Strategies for Cost Reduction and Operational Efficiency (continued)

Strategies for Increasing Funding and Capacity

Strategies for Reducing Costs (continued from previous page)

Shared Services and Partnerships

- Work with the SHRO to implement standardized procedures and timetables for recruiting, hiring, and on-boarding/off-boarding all staff, particularly seasonal employees; train supervisors in these systems in order to streamline the annual process for hiring seasonal employees.
- Better structure the park’s participation in a shared IT support network to ensure that park staff are receiving needed IT support in a timely fashion.
- Work with partner parks to identify opportunities to more effectively share network resources within the MABO and the natural resource inventory and monitoring, fire, and safety networks.

Other Programmatic Adjustments

- Employee Travel:** Encourage ride-sharing, participating in group trainings, and coordinating trips to town.
- Fleet Utilization:** While Pinnacles has a lower vehicle-to-FTE ratio than similar parks, there are still opportunities to achieve cost savings by better utilizing its existing fleet. Specifically, the park should review its need for sedans, as they were underutilized in FY 2012, per NPS’ Motor Vehicle Management guidance. Eliminating one of these vehicles would save several thousand dollars per year. The park should also consider transitioning towards more fuel-efficient vehicles and evaluate opportunities to share vehicles with other parks in the region that may have complementary seasonal demands.
- Facility Prioritization:** Build upon existing efforts to improve the condition of the park’s highest-priority assets, and develop a sustainable plan for managing the remaining assets. Facility maintenance efforts will focus on energy conservation where applicable.

- Implementation of Resource Stewardship Strategy (RSS):** Once completed, RRM and the other park divisions will focus on resource stewardship activities that the strategy identifies as very urgent and/or important.
- Cost Savings Program:** Create a system of rewarding employees for suggesting practical ideas that save the park money and improve operations.
- Greening Initiative:** In alignment with the NPS mission and Call to Action, consider ways to reduce carbon emissions and utility costs while evaluating additional ways to use renewable energy.
- Sharing pack stock with nearby parks:** Transferring pack animals to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks for five months each year to take advantage of complementary seasonal needs saves the park an estimated \$5,000 annually.
- Operating Hours:** Evaluate daily and weekly visitation patterns at the west side visitor contact station and the east side visitor center. Adjusting hours to better align with visitor use could improve visitor services and potentially lower operating costs. Wednesdays have historically been the park’s least-visited day, followed by Tuesdays and Mondays. Closing visitor centers on low visitation days is one way to achieve needed cost savings while limiting the impact on the visitor experience. For example, closing the west side visitor contact station on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from July through November, days when visitor demand is particularly low, could result in an estimated \$6,000 in savings. A similar analysis of visitor hours could yield additional opportunities for improved efficiency in visitor services. In determining an optimal operating schedule, it is important for management to consider intangible impacts to visitor services, visitor safety, and resource protection in addition to the potential financial benefits.

Strategies for Increasing Funding

Increasing Appropriated Base Funding

- While park management does not anticipate base increases in the near term, it will revise Operations Formulation System (OFS) requests to accurately reflect the park’s most pressing needs. Currently, the park’s top priority OFS request is for “New West District Visitor Center Operations.” Originally made in FY 2010, this requested budget increase would fund the recurring costs of operating and maintaining new facilities in the west district—supporting visitor safety, resource interpretation, and resource protection.

Increasing Appropriated Non-base Funding

- Regularly update and maintain FMSS (Facility Management Software Systems) and PMIS (Project Management Information Systems), making sure that projects are thoroughly reviewed and prioritized in alignment with park goals. These efforts will help the park better compete for project funding, particularly funding for facilities-related projects.
- Develop improved processes to streamline compliance planning so project implementation can begin immediately when the park receives non-appropriated base funds, and the park does not risk losing funding for critical projects on account of unfinished compliance planning.
- Ensure that proposed projects are self-sustaining and do not require significant recurring funds to operate. The park is unlikely to receive base funding increases to fund ongoing costs associated with new projects.
- Train staff to develop comprehensive project funding requests that include funds for necessary administrative and overhead costs associated with projects.

Increasing Revenue

- Develop and implement a user-friendly entrance fee collection system. Currently, visitors lack information or direction on where and how to pay the entrance fee at their arrival. Simultaneously, park staff have difficulty enforcing fee compliance. A conservative estimate suggests that the park loses upwards of \$50,000 in revenue each year as a result of fee noncompliance. The park will consider improving fee payment signage and the visibility and accessibility of its iron ranger honor boxes. Additionally, Pinnacles will analyze visitation patterns and develop an official policy for effectively staffing its entrance stations and fee collection booths.
- Complete the approval process for the park’s transportation fee increase request and implement the new proposed fee schedule: \$10 per vehicle per seven day pass (up from \$5 currently) in FY 2014. If enacted, this fee change would increase annual park revenues by a projected \$155,000. Much of this additional revenue could then be invested into the park’s shuttle bus system, used for transporting visitors to and from parking lots and trailheads on the east side. This investment would help decrease congestion, improve visitor orientation, and reduce the park’s carbon footprint.

Increasing Partnerships and External Support

- Facilitate the creation of a strategic plan for the Pinnacles Partnership (PIPA) that aligns with the park’s business plan. Collectively set measurable targets for the next three to five years that focus on ways the partnership can help the park achieve its goals, including community outreach, fundraising, coordinating volunteer events, fostering membership, and cultivating park stewards.
- Build upon the success of the volunteer program, which has more than tripled in size since 2008, by continuing to build a community of lifelong stewards, and cultivate the dedicated group of volunteers that contribute to Pinnacles year after year.
- Pursue grants and private philanthropy. Working with the Superintendent and Pinnacles Partnership, division chiefs will identify and pursue grants and philanthropic funding sources to support high priority projects.



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Drywall slide is one of several sandstone cliffs important to nesting raptors at Pinnacles.

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Become a member of the Pinnacles Partnership and support education, resource stewardship, and the visitor experience at the park:  
[www.pinnaclespartnership.org](http://www.pinnaclespartnership.org)  
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The green metallic sweat bee is one of 400+ bee species found at Pinnacles.



A park biologist talks to kids about butterflies and moths at the Pinnacles National Park rededication ceremony.



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